
NLSY79 APPENDIX 17:
ISIS DATA

ISIS Data

Many researchers are interested in knowing if or how much interviewers affect respondent's answers. To enable researchers to investigate these questions the NLSY79 data release contains information on each interviewer's characteristics. Information on the characteristics of NLSY79 interviewers comes from the National Opinion Research Center's (NORC) interviewer personnel files, which are called ISIS.

For each survey (1979–2000) the following ISIS variables are available: ISIS interviewer ID, number of times this interviewer has already interviewed the respondent, the interviewer's race, the interviewer's sex, the interviewer's age, the interviewer's educational level, the amount of time the interviewer has worked at NORC, the languages other than English spoken by the interviewer, a flag identifying if the interviewer was ever terminated and the last known pay rate (in U.S. dollars per hour) for the interviewer. For the surveys run from 1981 to 1985 two additional variables are available; the number of NORC surveys the interviewer worked on during the calendar year and the number of hours spent interviewing during the calendar year.

Researchers should note that CHRR was provided with only a single snap shot of the ISIS data base. This snapshot reflects the ISIS data base status a few months prior to the fielding of the NLS 1994 survey. Hence, changes in items like an interviewer's educational attainment or pay rate are not reflected in the data.

Constructing the ISIS ID

The key variable which links the NLSY79 data set with the ISIS data set is the ISIS Interviewer ID. This variable is similar but not exactly the same as the Interviewer ID variable which has been found on the NLSY79 public use data set for many years. The ISIS Interviewer ID is constructed from the NLSY79 Interviewer ID variable using the following steps.

First, the NLSY79 interviewer ID for all years prior to 1996 is divided by ten to truncate the last digit. This last digit was used to cluster interviewers together and the digit was not used in the ISIS data base. IDs for 1996 do not have this last digit.

Second, each ISIS ID was then run it through the list of all known interviewers who changed their ID. Interviewers changed their ID if they moved to a different states, were promoted or demoted. Only a partial list of interviewers who changed their ID is available so there is no year when the characteristics of all interviewers are known. However, even if all the characteristics of an interviewer are not known, every effort was made to create a consistent ID number since a researcher might be interested in knowing who interviewed whom from year to year even if other information like sex is not available..

The resulting ID was then used to search the ISIS data base. Most of the IDs match but a small number of Interviewer Ids do not. Table 1 below shows the number and percentage of respondents whose interviewer was found in the ISIS data base by survey year. Readers should note that most interviewers interviewed multiple respondents so not finding even a single interviewer in the ISIS data base causes dramatic changes in the number and percentage of interviewers found columns.

Two years (1979 and 1987) have large numbers of interviewers who were not found in the ISIS data base. 1979 has a large number because the ISIS data base was not started until 1980. Any interviewer who worked in 1979 but not in a later year was never added to ISIS. The 1987

interview was primarily fielded via the telephone to save money. Telephone interviewers who did not also do face-to-face interviews are not part of the ISIS data base.

Table 1. Interviewers Identified in ISIS by Survey Year

Year	# of Respondents Interviewed	# of Interviewers Matched in ISIS	Percentage Not Matched in ISIS
1979	12686	9619	24.2%
1980	12141	10946	9.8%
1981	12195	10967	10.1%
1982	12123	11400	6.0%
1983	12221	11980	2.0%
1984	12069	11585	4.0%
1985	10894	10374	4.8%
1986	10655	10119	5.0%
1987	10485	6825	34.9%
1988	10465	9394	10.2%
1989	10605	9906	6.6%
1990	10436	9321	10.7%
1991	9018	8105	10.1%
1992	9016	8480	5.9%
1993	9011	8618	4.4%
1994	8891	8701	2.1%
1996	8636	8050	6.8%
1998	8399	7736	7.9%
2000	8033	7814	2.7%
Average			8.9%

Other ISIS Variables:

This section describes all the other ISIS variables available beyond the Interviewer's ID.

Interviewer Count

This counts the number of years the interviewer has interviewed the respondent. For example if the interviewer count in 1986 contains a 4 this means that the 1986 interviewer for the respondent has already interviewed the person 4 previous times. Please note that the number of times does not include the 1986 interview. Also note the series does not look ahead into the future. If they are also interviewed by the same interviewer in 1987, this information is NOT used to calculate the 1986 number. All 1979 values are zero, since no one has been previously interviewed.

Interviewer Race

- 1 = White
- 2 = Black
- 3 = Hispanic
- 4 = Asian
- 5 = American Indian
- 3 = missing

Interviewer Sex

- 1 = Male

- 2 = Female
- 3 = missing

Interviewer Age

- Age of the interviewer in the interview year.
- 3 = missing

Interviewer Education

- 1 = Grade 0-8
- 2 = Grade 9-11
- 3 = High School Graduate
- 4 = Vocational degree
- 5 = Some College
- 6 = College Graduate
- 7 = Graduate School
- 8 = Masters Degree
- 9 = Professional Degree
- 0 = Other

Interviewer Tenure

- Number of years spent working at NORC as of interview year.

Interviewer Languages

- 1 = Spanish
- 2 = German
- 3 = Italian
- 4 = Polish
- 5 = Japanese
- 6 = Chinese
- 7 = Yiddish
- 8 = American Indian
- 9 = Portugese

Interviewer Type of Termination

- 0 - Never Left NORC
- 1 - Terminated by NORC for cause
- 2 - Left NORC by own choice

Interviewer Last Pay Rate (at time of ISIS dump)

- 1 \$3.00 to \$5.00 per hour
- 2 \$5.01 to \$7.50
- 3 \$7.51 to \$10.00
- 4 \$10.01 to \$15.00
- 5 \$15.01 and up
- 3 Pay Rate Not in ISIS

For 1981 to 1985 the following two variables also exist:

Hours

- Number of hours worked on NORC projects in calendar year

Count

Number of NORC surveys/projects worked on in calendar year